

CRUEL THE GRAVE: The Secret of Dunraven Castle.

BY ANNIE ASHMORE, Author of "Faithful Margaret," Etc., Etc.

CHAPTER XVI.—Continued.

Accrington had been gracefully lounging against the mantel-piece opposite his visitor, who had declined the offered chair; he now straightened his tall form, and threw back his head with a satirical look, which a most disguised his fierce agitation.

"And may one ask what power I have in the matter?" demanded he. "The power of the wronger to make reparation to the wronged!" answered Edgar, sternly. "Col. Accrington, it is useless to maintain any disguise. I have learned the whole history of your dealings with Lord Incheape and his unhappy lady, and I have come to you to entreat you for justice to them."

For a moment it seemed as if Accrington must spring upon him, so fierce was the glare of his eyes, as he glowered with rage and shame; but he steadily controlled himself, and stood white and mute, with clenched hands and quivering pulses, while Edgar went on speaking.

"It was not Lord Incheape who told me the story; doubly as he has suffered, I know he would perish on the rack before he would sue your mercy, or allow you to be sued on his behalf. By a strange chance I learned it, nevertheless, and I call upon you to set the wife right with the husband, and my Lord Incheape right with his colleagues who doubt his integrity through your agency."

Accrington was too proud to deny; he saw that Arden had the truth, and that equivocation would not blind him.

He sprang to see that the door was fast, and remained in that end of the apartment, pacing swiftly to and from, the only relief he permitted his violent excitement—while he strove to see the whole importance of this exposure in its relations to his ambitious schemes. A wild rage possessed him; he could have fallen upon the insolent accuser yonder and torn him limb from limb, if that would have given him back his damning secret and silenced accusation forever; but murder would not help him, that he knew; and he struggled with himself despairingly for composure, that he might work his way out of this net which had so suddenly been thrown over him.

If Arden chose to utter this accusation in public, Accrington's chance for election was ruined; nay, his very residence in Salford was impossible; for defy the accuser as he might, he could not disprove the accusation; and the whole country would side with the powerful Incheape to crush the suspected alien.

And Loveday would suspect as well as fear him! Loveday, whom his fierce heart still pursued with hungering covetousness, while he watched for the opportunity to pounce on her!

Would anything induce this foolish Don Quixote to be silent?

What did he know? Col. Accrington turned his lowering eyes upon Arden, and still striding about, said in a hoarse, changed voice:

"You have made an astonishing accusation; be good enough to inform me exactly what you refer to?"

Arden turned from him scornfully. He saw that he meant to have recourse to shift and evasion; there was no reaching his seared conscience.

"I appeal to your honor, Col. Accrington; act the honest man; do right, though the heavens should fall, and all righteous men shall respect you," he cried with energy, striving to inspire the wavering soul that might lack a spark to kindle it into generosity.

But Accrington could no longer act the honest man; he had so long made his choice of evil instead of good, that his character had determined towards the bad; he must now act according to the character which he had framed.

For a few moments he stood still, gazing furiously at Edgar, then he walked up to him, and still with his ferocious eyes riveted upon Edgar's, said slowly:

"Listen, my boy, I have permitted you to have your say, because I wanted to catch your game, but I will allow no word of all this to be uttered in any other hearing than my own. I utterly decline to discuss my private affairs with you, or any one else; and I warn you that you are meddling in a matter which you will blow for five long years through the nostrils of the man who is doing surely, to set you upon me!"

"My Lord Incheape knows nothing of this appeal," said Edgar haughtily; "you must know his nature better than to suppose that he could crouch to his base foe for his rights."

"That word shall cost you dear," said Accrington, frowning horribly as the word "base" fell like fire upon his pride. "God knows I wish it was misplaced!" exclaimed Arden, coldly observant of him. "Now, sir, let us to a more business-like view of the matter. If you will do Lord Incheape justice before the Lords of the Oriental Mission; I promise you to withdraw instantly from this contest for the borough of Salford, and leave you to walk over the course, as you phrase it. A few words of explanation from you will convince these men of his integrity, attained for five long years through no fault of his. What do you say, sir? I am the undisputed member for Salford, at the cost of a few words of deserved self-blame?"

"No!" thundered Accrington, writhing beneath the humiliating proposal; "if I be a villain, as you will have it, I am no mercenary villain; I will not sell my honor for anything more material than revenge. Be gone, insulting fool; you little know the spirit who have roused away from you, before I forget my elevation and horsewhip you within my own doors!" And he towered over Edgar convulsed with shame and rage.

"You refuse my prayer, then?" said Edgar bitterly; "and a guiltless man must suffer on to save Richard Accrington's spurious pride? Well, sir, I have given you your chance; I shall now op-

posed right against your poor craven might, and see which wins the battle. Good evening, sir; you shall not win the election this time; I know my people and am here."

With a low bow he withdrew, and walked out of the magnificent residence, thinking of the tortured countenance of its proud and guilty owner.

"The game is lost!" he sighed, as he rode down the fine avenue, "and I must look for aid."

He went direct to the Pavilion, and asked for Mrs. Dellamere.

She came to him smiling, radiant; it was lovely to see the peace and gladness in her eyes.

"Loveday is safe home," she murmured, yielding her hand willingly to the earnest grasp of the friend she trusted wholly; "Auberon and I went to Silverstream early this morning and brought her home before any of our acquaintances were astir. I really believe she will escape unharmed; and the wedding is to be soon. Squire Crecy and his wife are with us now; they always loved my girl."

Edgar caught at this opportunity while alone with Mrs. Dellamere, to ask for the history of Miss Dellamere's adventure.

As she told it he could easily trace the premeditated schemes of Accrington through the apparent accidents which had befallen the pair; and as he comprehended the strength of Accrington's passion, which had prompted him to commit such a piece of madness to gain possession of its object, he began to tremble for Miss Dellamere's future safety.

"The sooner the marriage is, the better it will be for Miss Dellamere," said he to her mother. "That man has not given her up yet. It is not in such a nature to accept defeat."

"I feel as you do about him," returned Mrs. Dellamere, anxiously. "To lose her would have been bitter enough, but to see her won by another will be unendurable. He may make another snatch at her. Ah! what can I do? I am alone save for my servants; I dare not be sure that I can protect her. And he is wily and strong. I am afraid, Mr. Arden, miserably afraid!"

"Does Miss Dellamere quite know the character of her fierce lover?" asked Edgar.

"I have never accused him," said she, with a gesture of repulsion. "Naturally, I have shrunk from the idea of revealing the vice of such a past as his to my white-souled girl. And I trust it is now unnecessary to warn Loveday against him; even if she did not love Auberon, she would never again fancy Accrington, for she fears and distrusts him vehemently since the late revelation of his unscrupulous policy. And she loves Auberon deeply."

"Cannot you hasten the marriage?" suggested Edgar.

"I do not know how to do that without giving her explanations which would startle and distress her; and she is so happy! Oh, let us guard her from sorrow as well as from peril, if we can! Can I rely upon you, my friend, to help me to keep my treasure safely?"

"Dear lady, need you ask? I shall keep watch over Col. Accrington's movements; and be you vigilant in your care of your daughter. In a few days I trust that I can turn the tables upon the enemy and put him to flight. And now may I see Miss Dellamere?"

Mrs. Dellamere looked earnestly in his face, wondering what power he held over Col. Accrington; but as he did not explain, she led him to the room where Loveday was, in the midst of her future connections.

Arden had always been a favorite of hers, and she welcomed him home to herself once more with a very pretty burst of enthusiasm; prophesying his victory over the rival candidate and his unanimous election by the people of Salford.

She was in radiant spirits; the grief which had oppressed her so long was all gone now; Auberon loved her, and they were betrothed. Mamma was delighted, and Mr. and Mrs. Crecy enchanted; how happy she was!

But though Edgar might smile at her saucy witticisms and sympathize with Auberon's cloudless joy, he often thought—with a gnawing thrill at the heart—of a certain Prince of the South who dwelt afar on lonely Sleaford-Vreen, and who wept because she deemed him dead.

CHAPTER XVII.

I WITNESS TO HER INNOCENCE!

Next evening, Edgar having just returned from a day among his electors, was greeted with the news that Mr. Sircombe had arrived within the hour, and that Lord Incheape desired to see Mr. Arden at once.

Edgar found my lord at home; he had not received his secretary until he could have Edgar to support him.

"I shall do whatever you please, my dear Edgar," said his lordship, and he showed him into his private sanctum, with the door ajar, that Edgar might hear the conversation and appear at his cue. Then he sent for his secretary.

Both men started when they met each other; Sircombe missed the hopeless look on the Earl's worn face, and Lord Incheape was astonished at the haggard change on Sircombe's.

He could not guess that his secretary had incurred blood guiltiness since last he saw him.

Edgar could hardly recognize the husky, hesitating voice which answered Lord Incheape's inquiries concerning the ladies on Sleaford-Vreen.

"Neither of them as well as usual! What is the matter?" exclaimed Lord Incheape, repeating Sircombe's words.

"A rather painful occurrence happened last week, which seems to have caused them great distress," returned Sircombe, turning away his face uncomfortably. "A young man who had been cast ashore from a yacht in a storm was received into the tower by my lady, and nursed back to health. He was a stranger, but a gentleman, and knew how to recommend himself to my ladies. Last week he chanced to go out alone in the skiff, and was drowned. This has afflicted the ladies greatly; they have been overwhelmed with grief."

"He was drowned?" echoed Lord Incheape, amazedly, for of this portion of the story Edgar had said nothing.

The secretary gave an account of the stranger's sojourn at the island, and with obvious confusion narrated his melancholy end.

"I—I am at a loss," stammered he. "To what can your lordship allude?"

"Beware, sir! You shall tell me the truth at last," said Lord Incheape, sternly.

Sircombe sank back in his chair half fainting. It is only thought was that in some supernatural way Lord Incheape had discovered the truth of the young stranger's disappearance.

For a moment he wished that he had in his pocket a pinch of poison, that he might swallow it before his ruin fell upon him.

Utterly speechless, he could only glare at his patron and struggle for breath.

"I see you know too well to what I allude," cried Lord Incheape, in sudden, fierce triumph. "Your very looks condemn you, and prove that a foul wrong has been done the innocent!"

"Mercy, mercy! my lord!" gasped Sircombe, far too bewildered to pick his words. "It was done on the impulse of a moment of madness, and bitterly repented—aye, with tears of torturing anguish."

"Strange repentance, that brought no reparation!" cried Lord Incheape, scornfully; "and that allowed you to live at ease in the very presence of your unhappy victim!"

"Oh, God forgive me!" groaned the wretched man, convinced that all was discovered by the Earl, and overwhelmed with shame and fear. "If my life could purchase his, I would yield it up gladly."

While Lord Incheape was staring in astonishment at this incomprehensible speech, the door opposite Sircombe swung open and Edgar Arden stood before him.

He started up, glared, gave one scream, and fell in a dead faint. Lord Incheape's eyes inquired of Edgar the meaning of all this.

"Leave him to me, now, my lord," whispered Edgar rapidly. "All is going on admirably. Express no surprise, only speak when I look at you."

A minute or two restored the secretary, he got up from the carpet with Edgar's help, and flung himself into a chair with a groan, covering his face with his hands.

He had never fainted in his life before; but he was not a strong man physically, and his recent distress of mind had reduced what strength he had; besides, the sudden apparition of the man he had supposed dead in the cell of the Southern Bastion, was enough to overcome any one.

And now, as he covered there before the Earl, he was thinking himself a ruined man, even the acute relief of finding his victim alive, and himself no murderer, was not enough to beguile him from his dread of consequences.

"You see there was a mistake about my fate," said Edgar as soon as he thought Sircombe was able to follow his meaning. "I was saved from a cruel death, which would have left Lord Incheape without his heir."

"Dear lady, need you ask? I shall keep watch over Col. Accrington's movements; and be you vigilant in your care of your daughter. In a few days I trust that I can turn the tables upon the enemy and put him to flight. And now may I see Miss Dellamere?"

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THE NEWS.

Clarence Jones, a notorious colored tough of Laurel, Del., murderously assaulted John Davis, a well-known young farmer residing near town, on the public street in Laurel, and for a time a riot was threatened between the whites and negroes. Davis was stabbed just over the heart with an oyster-knife, and his wound is serious. Jones was finally captured and has been sent to Georgetown jail to await the result of Davis' injuries.

Adam C. Henning was drowned while fishing through the ice at Highland Lake, N. Y. He attempted to rescue Charles Adams, a companion, who was thrown into the water by the breaking of the ice. The two men called loudly for help and William Terwilliger ran a mile, hitched up a horse and brought a boat. Terwilliger was in time to rescue Adams but too late to aid Henning.

Several hundred striking Italian miners are causing trouble at the Forest Coal Company's mine, at Archibald, a few miles north of Scranton, Pa., and excitement there is intense. Bloodshed was narrowly averted by the employment of armed detectives to preserve order.

Information received in Washington from London states that Mr. Bayard has declined the gift proposed to be made to him in recognition of his efforts in the cause of peace and good will between the United States and England.

Richard Rowe, who was extradited from Mexico, charged with complicity in looting the Poweshiek county (Iowa) treasury in 1895, was found guilty.

Julius Morgan, of New York City, a nephew of J. Pierpont Morgan, has purchased the property in Princeton known as Emma's Place. Mr. Morgan will remove to Princeton in the spring.

Fiscal returns from Santa Clara county, California, completing the state returns, show that Martin, Bryan elector, has defeated Flint, McKinley elector, by 432. This gives McKinley eight electors from California and Bryan one.

M. Lockroy, Ex-Minister of Marine, invites the budget committee of the Paris Chamber to include in the naval estimates \$40,000,000 for building new men of war, \$10,000,000 to be expended in 1897, and the remainder to be distributed over several years.

THE SOUTH.

Special reports to the Manufacturers' Record show that throughout the entire South there is a gradual but steady improvement in the sentiment regarding business, and the outlook is encouraging for marked activity after the new year. A great many railroad enterprises, some short lines and some of considerable extent, which have been held in abeyance for the last twelve months, are being taken up again with good prospects for early construction. In a number of cases contracts for building have been definitely closed, and the indications are for larger railroad building in the South during the coming year than we have had for several years.

Industrial matters also show a steady improvement, and while some people who had unwisely expected an immediate boom have been disappointed, there is a notable change for the better in all directions. Considerable shipments of iron are being made every week to foreign markets, and it is now regarded as an established fact that the South will assume an ever-increasing importance in the iron markets of the world. Contrary to the supposition of some people, these sales are being made at a profit, and foreign buyers who have been testing samples are gradually given very considerable orders. The opportunity of Southern furnaces to increase their shipments abroad is largely helped by the great increase in steamship service from Southern ports, affording more regular despatch and lower freight rates.

Among the industrial enterprises reported for the week are the decision of Northern people to carry out the plan projected some months prior to the election of building a \$500,000 cotton print mill at Birmingham; a \$50,000 electric light plant at Jacksonville, Fla.; iron nail works at Central City, Ky.; a 200 barrel flour mill at Hopkinsville, Ky.; development of coal lands near Catlettsburg, Ky.; negotiations pending for the purchase of 40,000 acres of land in West Virginia for large mining operations; \$25,000 woodwork at Franklin, La.; \$50,000 woodworking company at Aberdeen, Miss.; three new cotton mills in North Carolina, and the enlargement of another mill in the same State; a \$50,000 Kaolin plant at Langley, S. C., and electric light and water works at Hempstead, Texas; gas works at Newport News, Va., and a number of other miscellaneous enterprises.

While the list of new and prospective industrial enterprises reported for the week is less than the usual weekly average several years ago, it is considerably longer than any list published by the Manufacturers' Record during the last three or four months.

FIVE TRAINMEN KILLED.

A Terrible Collision Results from a Southern Pacific Freight Train Going to Sleep.

A collision between through freight trains on the Southern Pacific Road near Wadler, Texas, resulted in the killing of two engineers, two firemen and a brakeman.

The crew of the eastbound freight went to sleep while waiting on a siding. After they awoke they thought the second section of the through westbound freight was the third section, and so they put their train on the main line. The weather was foggy and the eastbound freight and the third section of the westbound train came together a few miles from the siding.

CYCLONE WIPES OUT A TOWN.

Ballston in the Osage Indian Nation, Loses Its Two Hundred Houses.

A very destructive cyclone struck the town of Ballston, on the Arkansas River, fifty miles northeast of Perry, Okla., on Thursday night, at 12 o'clock, and nearly wiped out the town of about 200 houses. Nearly every house in town was blown down, and several people were injured, but no names can be obtained. Ballston is in the Osage Indian nation, and fifty miles from a telegraph office.

FAMILY PERISH.

Five Meet Death in a Burning House in New York.

CHARRED BODIES FOUND.

Probably Started From a Defective Flue and Gained Rapid Headway—The Father Heroically Sought Help.

A despatch from Perry, N. Y., says—An entire family, including three helpless children and an invalid mother, were all destroyed in the flames, which consumed their home on the farm of Irving Thompson, four miles north of this village, at 7 o'clock Sunday morning. The details of the fearful holocaust have aroused the sympathy and horror of every inhabitant of the village. The names of the dead are: Luther Greenman, his wife and three small children, Annie, aged 6; Lottie, aged 3, and baby Arthur.

Greenman has been in the employ of Thompson for several years. Greenman resided with his family in one of the farm tenements. He was regarded as an excellent workman and was in a fair way to soon become an independent small farmer.

Mr. Thompson was aroused at 6:45 o'clock by the cries of his wife, who told him that the entire lower portion of the Greenman tenement was in flames. Mr. Thompson rushed from the house and hurried to warn the family. At this time the fire had probably been burning for a quarter of an hour. When he reached the house he grasped a piece of cord and rushed to the front door. When the door was opened the smoke and flames rushed out, making it impossible and dangerous for him to enter.

The cries of the children could still be heard on the upper floor, but it was impossible for Mr. Thompson to render them assistance, and in a few minutes the cries ceased. Mr. Thompson called two of his hired men to his assistance, and with their aid secured a ladder and attempted to enter the house through the bedroom window, in which the entire Greenman family was in the habit of sleeping.

When the window was opened Mr. Thompson saw the body of Greenman lying near the window, as if the unfortunate man had made one last effort to call for help, and the smoke and flames had overpowered him. The flames, fanned by the drafts created by the opened door and window, again drove Mr. Thompson away.

By this time some of the neighbors had hurried to the spot, but they, too, were powerless to rescue the people, and were compelled to stand passive until the dwelling became a mass of embers. An attempt was then made to find the bodies.

Greenman's corpse, a charred and shapeless mass of flesh, was found first. The face and arms were disfigured beyond recognition, but the clenched fist indicated too plainly the awful agony which the poor man must have endured. It is thought that he was aroused by the smoke, and was suffocated while attempting to give the alarm.

Mrs. Greenman's body was found among the ruins of the bed. The blackened bodies of the children lay a few feet away.

CABLE SPARKS.

Fire in Ottawa, Ont., destroyed business property valued at \$330,000.

It is reported that the King of Korea is acting entirely under the influence of three Americans.

Max Alvery, the tenor singer, who was reported ill in Germany, has been cured by a surgical operation.

The dock strike at Bremen, Germany, is over. The Hamburg dockers resolved to declare a general strike.

It is officially announced that a small band of insurgents attacked Guanabacoa, near Havana, and burned a house, but were repulsed.

The Italian Chamber of Deputies adopted a vote of confidence in the government in connection with the government's colonial policy.

France and Italy have agreed upon a convention respecting Tunis which is said to aim at the ultimate exclusion of England from Egypt.

The trial of four journalists charged with libeling high German officials was begun at Berlin. Revelations concerning a court clique are expected.

A slight fire occurred in Blenheim Castle, England, the home of the Duke and Duchess of Marlborough. The Duchess was fortunately Miss Consuelo Vanderbilt.

The insurgent attack on Guanabacoa, on the outskirts of Havana, was more serious than at first reported. The garrison of the fort was ambushed and all killed by the insurgents.

Dr. Leander S. Jameson was released from Holloway jail, in London, where he was confined under a sentence of fifteen months for his part in the Transvaal raid. His release was ordered of medical grounds.

The Court of Appeals at Alexandria has decided that the Egyptian government must repay \$2,500,000 advanced by the commission of the Egyptian debt to meet the expenses of the British-Egyptian expedition to Dongola.

WASHINGTON BRIEVITIES.

Chief